United Nations E/2005/NGO/12

# Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
25 May 2005

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**Substantive session of 2005**
New York, 29 June-27 July 2005
Item 2 of the provisional agenda*
**Achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration, as well as implementing the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits: progress made, challenges and opportunities**

## Statement submitted by All India Women's Education Fund Association, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

05-36480 (E) 140605

## Statement

All India Women's Education Fund Association (AIWEFA) just celebrated its Platinum Jubilee in March 2005. The organization has dedicated itself to the advancement of women in all sectors with emphasis on education. It has been working intensively on capacity-building, awareness generation, skill development, organization of women in Self Help Groups (SHGs) for their empowerment etc. AIWEFA also took up networking with other NGOs under the UN NGO IRENE and has been able to form partnerships with a number of other NGOs in the country with similar objectives.

Apart from combating poverty and deprivations of all kinds — economic, social, cultural and political — women feel excluded in the development process and fail to get basic amenities for their quality of life. One such area is the availability of sanitary latrines for their comfort. The absence of this facility has caused a great deal of health hazards for women, taken its toll upon their enrolment in schools (for want of this facility in the schools) and even been a cause of violence against them. (Women are molested when they go in the dark, at the end of the day or early in the mornings to ease themselves.) AIWEFA has, therefore, undertaken a project for creating a sanitary latrine facility in three villages in Haryana under their rural development project. The programme involves awareness generation of the benefits of sanitary latrines, provision of the technology for building cost-effective latrines, encouraging the householders by providing some components for the latrine and guiding them in the construction of the latrines. The households in the three selective villages have gone through the training phase and are now involved in the construction. This will have a very strong demonstration effect in the area and help many other villagers to adopt this technology and improve their quality of life.

The organization of women into SHGs has been a major step in preparing the community to adopt new ideas and change their traditional practices, some of which have deprived women of a great deal in the facilities, like sanitation, clean environment, security etc. The training on nutrition, health practices, use of clean water and sanitation, all of which are part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), reach this community very effectively and pay high dividends in terms of a higher quality of life. AIWEFA is proud to have been able to work with the rural people to fulfil their urgent needs.

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## Statement submitted by Alliance Toward Harnessing Global Opportunities Corporation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

05-36486 (E) 150605

## Statement

The ATHGO *International* student participants in "Architects of the Future: Young Diplomats and the Millennium Development Goals" adopt the following resolutions on 28 April 2005:

Recognizing the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world,

Recalling the basic human rights outlined in the *UN Charter*,

Invoking the spirit of multilateralism and solidarity of all Member States of the UN in promoting the achievement of the MDGs,

Recognizing and affirming that the realization of all human rights and freedoms are indispensable to the promotion of sustainable development and democracy,

Determined to take new steps forward with the commitment of the international community to achieve the MDGs by 2015:

1. Urges all states which have made the commitment to contribute 0.7 percent of their GDP in ODA, to realize their promises without delay;

2. Calls upon all states to encourage youth awareness of the MDGs and promote volunteering programs in developing countries as a testament to the success of grassroots campaigns;

3. Urges states to ensure equal access to all media outlets and to promote media diversity which is essential to public awareness of the MDGs and global issues;

4. Recommends that states issue reports on a district to district basis within states to fully monitor implementation of initiatives geared toward MDG success and their outcomes in recognizing that national totals regarding the success and implementation of the MDGs may not be useful when given each year by countries who experience such a wide disparity of economic and social conditions;

5. Encourages states to engage social, local, and cultural groups in order to address cultural sensitivities and traditions that may impact the implementation of goal initiatives by state, NGO and other civil society organizations;

6. Recommends that states develop a system of Social Marketing Recognition as a means of monitoring the distribution of donated goods to the people ensuring that they are clearly labeled as donated goods in order to prevent states and local governments from reselling these goods on the market;

7. Calls for further action of member states to engage states that are unwilling or unable to accept NGO assistance and presence within their borders in order to account for the millions of internally displaced persons and refugees who are currently beyond the reach of any foreign assistance;

8. Urges states to direct state and local aid to UN programs and NGOs that may be directly accountable for the distribution and monitoring of aid and program activities within partner states, which in turn ensures legitimacy and transparency of monetary and other forms of aid;

9. Recommends the implementation of reassessment timelines for all states in an effort to monitor the visible success of MDG initiatives within each state and allow for continuous reevaluation of state and NGO approaches toward achieving MDGs;

10. Urges states to keep MDGs and all related issues at the forefront of state agendas;

11. Encourages states to increase initiatives for personal and cultural exchanges.

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## Statement submitted by Oasis Open City Foundation, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 30 and 31 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/2005/100.

05-36492 (E) 130605

220 Participants representing Governments, intergovernmental and non governmental organizations (NGOs), universities, academia, business community gathered in Sintra, Portugal, from 25 to 26 January 2005 to attend the Forum Local Agenda 21: Sustainability and Municipalism. After two days of deliberations, participants adopted the Sintra Declaration to contribute to an effective implementation of Local Agenda 21 and sustainable development. On the basis of the consensus reached, participants pledged to implement the Declaration through concerted efforts. Already, 124 municipalities have subscribed their participation to implement the present Declaration complying with UN recommendations, Local Agenda 21 and MDGs.

## Sintra Declaration

### Preamble

1. It has been recognized the great delay in adopting and implementing Agenda 21 in Portugal.

2. Agenda 21 implementation in Portugal calls for the engagement of the Portuguese society as well as of the authorities in finding, through their creativity, solutions and initiatives.

3. Agenda 21 implementation needs, first and foremost the involvement of municipalities' governments.

4. In the process of elaboration of local Agenda 21 fora and working groups have to represent means of civic participation for deepening knowledge of local issues.

5. Because each municipality represents a single case solutions have to take into account the diversity of circumstances and factors conditioning the local context.

6. The concept of "trust" is decisive in promoting participation which in turn represents the base for building and reinforcing trust.

7. Public issues are a common good, a field of application of democracy and the essence of Agenda 21.

8. The complexity and slowness of Portuguese bureaucracy is the principal difficulty for the creation of new small and médium scale economic activities.

9. The relationships among local authorities are generally competitive and this competitiveness may be exploited for purposeful ends.

10. Agenda 21 has to be turned in an historical opportunity for revitalizing and reinforcing the positioning of municipalities in the national and international context.

11. Reference has to be made "United Nations Department of Social Affairs, Division for Sustainable Development" premise on Agenda 21 recognizing the functions and specific responsibilities of the nine principal groups representing the civil society:

    a. Women

b. Children and Youth

c. Indigenous People

d. Non-governmental Organizations

e. Local Authorities

f. Workers and Trade Unions

g. Business and Industry

h. Farmers.

**Recommendations**

1. Establishing a Council for developing an effective National Program for Agenda 21 which can be formed by the forum organizers endowed with appropriate technical and financial resources.

2. Avoiding that Agenda 21 might become a new bureaucratic mechanism but making all efforts for it to become a catalytic factor for developing civil society.

3. Promoting through this new entity links among national and international organizations so as to integrate local learning models with a context of cultural and economic globalization targeting economic and entrepreneurial growth.

4. Taking into consideration, in developing local Agenda 21, the municipalities' territorial identity as an important factor to shape a new type of organization.

5. Making and disseminating an inventory of:

   a. Municipalities which already adopted or have in course of adoption Agenda 21,

   b. NGOs experts in sustainable development and Agenda 21 issues.

   c. Professionals and practitioners specialized in sustainable development and Agenda 21.

   d. Groups supporting Agenda 21 implementation including Forum participants.

   e. International entities capable of supporting Agenda 21 implementation and processes towards sustainability.

6. Implementing Agenda 21 in such a way to keep, preserve traditional and tacit knowledge avoiding the research of innovation for the sake of innovation.

7. Propitiating mechanisms for a timely and adequate information to citizens in order to make local administrators actions transparent and make it possible their participation in the planning and decision making process.

8. Adopting methodologies and approaches for analysing, valorizing, enhancing places and specific resources around which to organize territorial development.

9. Developing a way of thinking and attitudes towards the creation of cross sectoral partnerships able to promote an integrated and multisectoral approach to local development.

10. Preserving history, and cultural heritage both tangible and intangible and all elements which identify local populations and promote social cohesion.

11. Developing new tools, proposals and events for promoting Agenda 21 such as special awards also involving United Nations.

12. Making more aware the educational community about the determinant role it can play in building Agenda 21, through its active participation in defining a "sustainable architecture" also for schools, exploring interactive approaches within the school and its area of influence.

13. Enhancing communication, participation among young people through the use of appropriate media.

14. Structuring and making available educational programs in the areas of Citizenship and Information Society.

15. Developing tools for providing local players information, showcasing, best practices, legislation etc.

16. Recommending either IQA or another pertinent Portuguese organization to be part of an international working group developing a system of indicators for assessing local context and progress towards sustainability.

17. Establishing an observatory as a sub-commission of Council mentioned in point 1) for monitoring indicators.

18. Including association of condominiums in the list of entities to be invited at the fora and events.

19. Suggesting the following initiatives to be taken at municipal level:

    a. To reformulate sectoral policies;

    b. To find ways to incentive participation/transparency in the decision making process.

    c. To endow municipalities with the information technology means and human resources to manage information and data about initiatives, actions, programs related to Agenda 21 implementation.

    d. To provide for a percentage of Governmental budgets on behalf of municipalities which effectively implement Agenda 21.

    e. To include cultural and historical themes so as to create a sense of belonging, identification and participation among citizen.

20. Urging central legislative authorities to rethink the bureaucratic process and promote institutional strengthening among governmental agencies to shorten times of authorization procedures on behalf of new economic activities.

21. Making entrepreneurs associations aware (especially, RSE Social Entrepreneur Responsibility) of the necessity to link their action to territorial development. RSE, in particular could create through networks tools and incentives for upgrading the environment and the information to the citizen/ consumer.

22. Creating in each municipality a Focal Point as a credible entity and a facilitator for Agenda 21. "Focal Point" will have to master techniques for conducting meetings, working and task groups.

23. Turning Sintra Forum in a permanent forum with working groups, seminaries, conferences.

24. Creating a "Virtual Community" with the support of participants who agree the following:

    a. Contribute to structure a web space in the technological platform Oracle owned by Open City International and aimed to support the above recommendations 1, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 16, and promoting a wide interaction among local players.

    b. Contribute to create an Open City/UNDESA award dedicated to municipalities engaged in the implementation of Agenda 21.

    c. Supporting FOCA Portugal in its proposal to create a Center of Excellency for an industrial re-conversion in the rural region of Vale do Sousa with European partners.

25. Publishing a book dedicated to the forum with all the speeches so that central and local authorities, universities, NGOs, etc. can have access to the themes presented and discussed at the event.

26. Sending these recommendations to the government representatives, political leaders and other civil society institutions.